

REFLECTIONS

Trade
in Amer.
25.

ON THE

MOST PROPER MEANS

OF

REDUCING THE REBELS,

AND

WHAT OUGHT TO BE

THE

CONSEQUENCE OF OUR SUCCESS.

Parcere subjectis & debellare superbos.

VIRG.

By an OFFICER, who served last War in America.

L O N D O N :

PRINTED FOR THE AUTHOR, AND SOLD BY
J. WILKIE, No. 71, ST. PAUL'S CHURCH-YARD.

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INTRODUCTION.

HAVING served the most of last war in America, I was able to form a comprehensive idea not only of the country, but of the inhabitants. So early as the year 1757, in the disposition of the New-England people I could plainly discover the seeds that have produced the present rebellion; and since the battle of Lexington, have been under more anxiety for the honor and safety of my country than in any other war; fearing, that from our not understanding the character of the rebels, we should be much duped and injured by them; but now I see, with great satisfaction, that their views are pretty well understood here,

and that we are carrying on the war against them with the same vigour as if they were *not our brethren and friends*. Being too infirm for service, I offer my sentiments upon the present state, which I have formed from a minute attention to every thing that has been done and wrote upon the subject, wishing sincerely, that they in some measure may be productive of peace and tranquility to the empire.

REFLECTIONS

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ON THE

MOST PROPER MEANS

OF

REDUCING THE REBELS, &c. &c.

FROM the smallest beginnings frequently arise the greatest events. No person, the least acquainted with the situation of Great-Britain and America, could possibly have imagined, that affairs between the two countries could have got to such an alarming pitch from such a trifling origin, to wit, the meetings and votes of some of the most factious, and, till then, most insignificant members of the community, disapproved of by the most sensible and well disposed of

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the several Colonies. It is a singular fact in history, that numbers of people should meet without labouring under any oppression but such as was merely speculative at most, and by the breathings of sedition and design, be inspired with a rage not to be paralleled, so as to submit to a total subversion of all their antient laws and customs, and to throw off every trace of humanity. This observation would not have been made, but as it affords an exceeding good lesson to the moderate and well-disposed in every society, to take the alarm at once when a mob attempts an invasion of the constitution, and to strangle the efforts of sedition in their birth. It is a truth to be lamented, though not so easily accounted for, that the designing and flagitious are much more active to destroy the peace of mankind, than the honest and upright are to defend it: they may either look upon the efforts of their opponents in too contemptible a light, allowing them the will,

will, but not the power to do mischief, or trust to others to suppress them; but this is a grand political mistake. If men of property and consequence in America had at once stepped forth, and openly avowed their disapprobation of such resolutions, they might have been very easily overthrown; but they soon gathered such strength as to set all resistance at defiance. With a small labour you prevent a river from overflowing; but when it has exceeded, no human art can reduce it to its former channel. However trifling the party engaged, or absurd their schemes, yet if they are levelled with a deadly malice against the constitution, they ought to be combated and overthrown at once.

THE artifices of a discarded faction certainly have promoted the cause of rebellion, and perhaps may have been the origin of it; but the Parliament, by a just and spirited

act, have in a great measure put a stop to such a treacherous correspondence. This faction, by their impotence, have long ceased to be mischievous in this country, and it is now hoped they will not be able to scatter their poison in America. The origin of the present dissensions, then, I attribute entirely to the arts of a few self-interested and designing men; because all the reasons which the Americans have avowedly given as the cause of them, have been so clearly and fairly refuted, that it would be ridiculous to insist upon them, and trespassing upon the patience of the public to enter into a fresh examination of them.

So far, indeed, were they from having any right to declare war against us, that their violent destruction of the property of our East India Company gave just ground of war against them, which we certainly should

should have taken up against any independent nation whatever.

HOWEVER, all reasoning is now over; the uncandid, insolent manner with which they have treated every attempt for accommodation, their horrid cruelty and depredations on the property of the King's faithful subjects, and the daring attack upon our troops, have compelled us to draw the sword, and it is to be hoped that it will not be sheathed till the most unprincipled rebels that ever infested society, are brought by severe punishment to a sense of their duty, and a submission to those laws which alone render mankind superior to the brute creation.

SINCE the war is inevitable, we are to consider the properest methods of carrying it on. In order to help us to this, the situation of the two countries engaged ought to be maturely attended to.—Great-Britain,

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with a free trade, supplied with every necessary and convenience for carrying on the war—and America, labouring under a notorious deficiency in these respects. It is advanced indeed, that the Americans make great quantities of gunpowder; but the great risque they run to get it from foreign powers, and the high price they give for what they can procure upon the spot, render this account exceedingly problematical. Salt, an absolute requisite of life, they certainly cannot procure within themselves, nor any kind of cloathing nearly adequate to their wants, the winter in the greatest part of America being very severe and long.

It has generally been allowed, that as to corn and other provisions, they have sufficient amply for their consumption; but if this business continues, that will not long be the case. The alarms occasioned in a country which is a seat of war, or what is the

the same thing, is in hourly expectation of becoming so, must prevent the regular operations of husbandry. Besides, the farmer has very little incitement to continue his labours, without which human nature will not be active, as he finds he cannot export the produce of his lands. The internal demand must be very trifling, compared to what might be produced; and even that trifle is to be paid in paper, which he must know can, at any rate, be of but little value: for it is certain, that that money is sunk vastly below its par, and that one decisive stroke in our favour would destroy the credit of it totally, which is a very important advantage we have over the rebels. The farmer concludes, that he ought not to labour without emolument, joins in the general rage for arms, and, to prevent oppression in that line of life, seeks for preferment in it.

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THIS being the case, it must strike us as the first grand object of our policy in carrying on the war, to prevent all manner of supplies from reaching them. It is evident, from the number of ships we have already out, and many which are going, that, with due vigilance and activity, this important point might be attained, and the war ended sooner than by all other methods that could be fallen upon.

It may be looked upon as an undoubted fact, that as they are at present situated, they could not possibly hold out another winter, being by no means furnished with the common necessaries of life for that purpose.

IN this light I view every vessel that is seized, carrying cloathing or ordnance to the rebels, as of much more consequence than twenty dislodgements from the deepest
trenches,

trenches, points always gained with great expence of blood to us, and of very small importance to the general business. If they are dislodged, they only change their position, and are still ready to annoy us again; but the other great object may be obtained in most instances without the loss of a single individual: for allowing, that they have fitted out some few vessels of force, yet they must be so infinitely inferior to ours in every respect, that to mention them in any degree of competition would be ridiculous and absurd.

If all supplies are prevented, their boasted numbers will be turned against themselves, and their army, like the Roman empire—*mole ruet sua*.

THOUGH the strict and rigid execution of the *restraining law* will have the speediest effect upon the war, yet the land-forces

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may be disposed of to act with great advantage.

WHETHER General Howe's dereliction of Boston proceeded from choice or necessity, it was certainly an happy event for the British troops. On the mention of this great General I cannot help, as an Englishman, returning him my hearty thanks, and glorying in him as an honour to his country. There certainly could be no propriety in the forces remaining there, because the rebels are more united, and stronger, than in any other part. Though the British soldiers are brave to a proverb, there is no reason that they should be voluntarily employed in desperate, forlorn attacks; for numerous as the rebels are, there appears to have been no possibility of getting them into a fair field engagement, and our brave countrymen were to have been sacrificed by
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these cowardly assassins from behind hedges and stone walls.

IF the war is properly conducted, the advantage that our fleet gives us over the rebels, renders their superior numbers of very little consequence. Whenever, at any time, we find ourselves greatly outnumbered by them, we can embark immediately (especially as we have every reason to expect so perfect a cordiality between the commanders of the navy and army) and gain possession of some other place, and by these means harass their main body with continual marches: for it is certain, they will not be able to convey their forces by sea, nor would they do it if they had it in their power; for they could never bring themselves to feel so bold on board of ships, as when in trenches up to their chins, and the further security of walls to fly to, when they were beat out of them.

By a fair wind we might at any time reach a distance in a few days, which would take the rebels many weeks to gain. By this method of shifting the scene, they might be much fatigued and annoyed, to the great benefit of Great-Britain.

Our troops remained at Boston during the severity of the winter, and made all the use of the town which they desired. They stayed till a great number of rebel forces, not only of New-England, but of all the continent, were gathered round : they then, by an excellent piece of generalship, and without the least difficulty, depart, and at once change the whole state of the war. But what is to become of the vast number of rebel troops there, after the rejoicing for the possession of the new Zion is over? Are they to remain there without any object? The rebels, numerous as they boast themselves, can ill afford that so many men should

should remain inactive, or merely as a gar-
rison. Are they to disperse? If they do,
Boston will be again at the service of the
King's troops, if the prolongation of the
war should render it requisite.

INCIDENTAL advantages would arise
from this method of conducting the war.—
The King's troops coming by surprize on
any place, might have plenty of fresh pro-
visions, either by seizing them, or laying a
town under contribution.

IT should be a fixed resolution to secure
as many of the leading men, wherever they
go, as possible; not with a view to punish
or insult them, but as hostages to compel
common humanity to be used to the King's
liege subjects, who are unhappily in the
hands of their rebel tyrants.

THE

THE destruction of the towns on the sea-coast should be as much avoided as possible. This step would highly please a majority of the rebels for two reasons: 1st, Because they look upon the towns on the sea-coast so easily destroyed, as some kind of security in the hands of government to enforce their obedience. 2dly, They have an hatred to most towns, because the officers and friends of government, for their business, chiefly resided and had property in them, it would therefore but glut their malice to have them destroyed, which was sufficiently proved in the burning of Norfolk.

AFTER investigating the subject in the best manner I am capable of, the following disposition of the troops seem to me most reasonable to enable them to put an end to the rebellion; to wit, that the army be divided into two main bodies, the one to act in Canada, the other to the southward. It
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has always been an opinion, and without doubt well founded, that the Canadians were compelled to take part in the rebellion, by the number of their *kind friends and neighbours*, who, like the antient Goths and Vandals, poured in upon them. It is by no means to be apprehended but that, if there was a sufficient force to countenance them in it, they would take up arms against the rebels, and give us every assistance. If this is the event, by the accession of such a strength, after expelling the rebels, we might with great weight, either by sea or land, enter New-England, and soon bring them to subjection, or take possession of their whole country. Government seems lately to have acted upon these principles in Canada, and it is the duty of every good subject to give it his support, and to justify its proceedings to the people whenever it can be fairly done.

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THE same reason which should induce us principally to carry on the war at Quebec, should be a motive for our doing the same to the southward, to wit, the internal weakness of the rebels, arising from their enemies among themselves. Every body acquainted with the southern parts of America knows, that the number of black slaves are at least double the number of the white people; that they are an able-bodied, brave people, highly oppressed by their tyrants, and of course would enter with great spirit and alacrity into any scheme to alter their miserable condition. A large body of the King's forces landing in * Carolina, would meet with a prodigious number of these people, who would join them as soon as a

* I mention Carolina as an instance, not indeed without some kind of preference, as we have undoubted authority to say, that there are a great number of *disaffected*, as the rebels call them there: the regulators, by all accounts, are a numerous and powerful body.

standard was erected for that purpose, provided they had arms sufficient to put into their hands. They would be found to be of the highest advantage in every respect: they would, in a short time, make excellent soldiers, and great benefit would result from the minute intimate knowledge they have of the different parts of the country they might come from; they would inform the officers wherever provisions could be had, and would make the best foragers. Of these facts I speak by experience, for many blacks were employed in our service during last war. Considering the state of affairs at present, no reasonable man could object to this expedient, so far as it relates to the rebels themselves. Indeed this method has been objected to on account of the English creditors, as the slaves were in part security for their debts; but any difficulty arising from that circumstance might be easily ob-

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viated.

viated. Let it be considered, that if the rebels are not conquered, the British creditors will lose the whole of their debts, by the bye, no small object of the present contest; besides, the real security in the colonies is sufficient to satisfy their minds on that head. This scheme put in execution, would certainly reduce the southern parts of America to reason and justice; they must then of course sever themselves from the rebellious congress, and by these means the old maxim of *divide et imperi* would be fully put in practice. If their success is not so immediate as may be expected from such numbers joining them, both white and black, as certainly will in their progress, the great object of our two main bodies should be to make a junction at New-York, that being the most central, and, upon the whole, the best affected colony we have.

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IF it was possible for a campaign, so conducted, to fail of victory, (for it is to be observed, that I go much upon the idea of multitudes flocking to the King's standard) we have still the grand resource in our hands, by the strength and number of our shipping, of most effectually preventing all manner of supplies from reaching them, and by these means shortly reducing them to the greatest necessity—the most shocking of all necessities to them, of becoming just and obedient to the laws, which I am satisfied is all that is meant by government.

IT is reported that the rebels have drove their live stock as far back into the country as they could: this can be of no advantage to them, though it may render it more difficult for the King's troops to be supplied; for it has been universally allowed, that the cultivated parts of America were

full as well stocked with cattle as they could bear, if not more so, therefore the accession of such numbers as were supported upon the sea-coast, and the banks of large navigable rivers, will exceed all proportion to the food, and thousands of them must perish. I would mention, that there are large islands in the bays in America stocked with cattle, &c. which would be always under command of our ships, and might be of great service to our troops. If these too are carried off the islands (which I can hardly imagine) and drove back into the country, they would increase the scarcity and distress mentioned above. In short, their exceeding want of policy is as apparent, and their schemes are as puerile and ridiculous, as their cause is unjust; an happy union for the honest part of mankind!

To

To sum up the whole upon this head—
 That by a vigorous prosecution of the war,
 the rebels may be soon conquered, I have
 no doubt. That they may be conquered
 by force of arms, I think exceedingly proba-
 ble; but that they must be conquered by a
 vigilant and active execution of the restrain-
 ing law is certain: for if the Americans were
 never able, at any time, to supply themselves
 with cloaths and other necessaries of life, no
 reasonable man can possibly believe that
 they can do it in their present distracted
 state. If they attempt to supply themselves
 from foreign nations, the distance they will
 have to go will render it almost impossible
 for even one ship to escape. - By keeping a
 due look out on our parts, we may gene-
 rally meet with them either near their own
 ports or the foreign ones, though this most
 important object has not been sufficiently
 attended to.

AFTER

AFTER conquering, or rather reducing the rebels to obedience, our next consideration should be, what ought to be their future situation, so as to render the connection of any benefit to us, and so as to prevent the like insurrections. I do not mean to point out every minute article which ought to be insisted upon and settled, after the restoration of peace and order; but only to mark the great outlines of their future establishment, without which we had better at once follow the plan of the ingenious and learned Dean Tucker, of declaring them independent, provided we can at any rate get in the immense debt due to our merchants. Let our power be ever so great over the Americans, far be it from us to use it with any degree of wanton tyranny, cruelty, or injustice. No; let the British clemency be in this, as in every other instance, as conspicuous as their bravery. Let

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us grant every indulgence that the just commercial interest of Great-Britain will allow of, and their power and disposition to annoy us, will permit.

THE navigation act should be the first grand object of our attention: the force of this, indeed, was never denied by the congress, though that now is as much trampled on as any other. All acts, likewise, that tend to strengthen this great pillar of our connection, should be insisted upon in their full extent.

THEIR complaints against the jurisdiction of the admiralty arose from their propensity to smuggling; as it interfered so materially with this darling object, they reprobated it in the strongest terms. So far as this jurisdiction tends to prevent their trading with other nations (for in New-England

land this illicit commerce had got to a pitch far beyond the common idea of smuggling) it ought to be most rigourously insisted upon and executed. If there are any parts of it which may put it in the power of a judge to vex and distress upon trivial matters, no wise important for the preservation of the navigation act, candor would do such away, and ample justice should be done to the sufferers complaining, in a *legal way*, of any abuse of authority in the admiralty.

As all laws are futile without force to compel obedience to them, and as the civil power in America has been proved to be no wise adequate to it, the right of sending and quartering soldiers in any part of his Majesty's dominions should be insisted upon. This, Lord Chatham himself, the great advocate for America, has proposed should be an article of accommodation.

THE courts of justice in America should be immediately put upon a different footing. In some of the colonies the judges have no salaries at all, which is the introduction of weak and improper men to that important rank. In others, the salaries of the judges are granted precariously as the people please, by which means they become liable to be overborne by popular prejudices, and entirely unfit for their stations. Judges should certainly be independent of both King and people, and for this reason *liberal fixed* salaries should be allowed by all the assemblies upon the continent. These terms appear evidently so much to the advantage of the community where they are to extend, that it may seem strange that a conquering nation should be obliged to insist upon them: but when it is considered how much even one independent nation is concerned in the due administration of jus-

tice in another, with which it has any dealings, it will immediately occur how much we must be interested in the purity of the courts of justice in America, and how clear the distributors of law ought to be from all popular bias. When the judges receive their pay from the capricious determination of the people where they reside, we may easily imagine what would be their conduct, where the interest of an Englishman and native is in dispute upon some popular topic, I fear human frailty would prevail, and the integrity of the judge be lost. We have seen, with regret, that no attempt was ever made in their courts of justice to punish the most extraordinary riot, in all its consequences, that ever happened; I mean the nefarious destruction of the tea. A judge, equal to his station, and totally independent of popular influence, would have given this riot in charge to the grand jury, and perhaps,

haps, by his dignity and perseverance, might have occasioned something to have been done to have prevented this horrible war.

To support the dignity of, and give strength to government, all the essential officers of it ought to be provided for in a *certain, liberal and independent* manner: I am far from meaning the establishment of sinecures and pensions among them; but it is well known how precarious the subsistence of any of the officers of government is in America, where their services are to be either paid for by the people, or occasional grants of their assemblies; so much so, that their offices become hardly worth the acceptance of men qualified by abilities of education to execute them. When this point has been pressed upon the Americans, they have always, with great *sang froid*, replied,

surely Great-Britain can have nothing to do with these internal regulations, if men of integrity, &c. do not execute the offices, *we* are the sufferers; but I hope my readers at once see the fallacy of this proposition. Great-Britain is highly interested in the appointment of proper men to discharge the public business of each colony. All individuals trading, or having any property in America, are highly interested. The government is highly interested in having such an establishment as may encourage men capable to give some support to it, and to prevent all the weight being, as it has hitherto been, in the popular scale, which totally destroys our constitution, the idea of which consists altogether in an equilibrium.

THE resumption of charters ought never to be put in practice without the
greatest

greatest necessity: people who settle under the faith of them, ought to have every reasonable security for their continuance, though at the same time they are certainly liable to forfeiture by abuse; and it is equally certain, that the people of Massachusetts Bay were notoriously guilty of that abuse: however, I would propose in future, that some fair mode of trial, adapted to this particular case, should be insisted upon and settled. If the Americans treat us with candor, and have a desire to settle all constitutional matters upon a solid foundation, this important point may be fixed without giving any just ground of alarm to either people.

Principiis obsta, is a favourite maxim in morality, and ought to be so in politics: without a number of previous, seditious meetings, and petty outrages, we should never see a multitude in rebellion, which is
always

always brought on step by step. The bulk of the people are deceived generally by their leaders, who shew them no more of their schemes than what is requisite for the moment, and so lead them gently, till they find it as difficult to retreat as to go on. To obviate, therefore, the first movements of sedition, I would propose a riot act in America to the same purpose as that in England, which I am convinced would, for the future, be of infinite advantage. Thousands of men, who would shudder at the thought of doing any thing which the law terms felony, are led by an imperceptible progression to the pinnacle of high treason. These men, therefore, who by the reading of a riot act, are at once apprised that they will be guilty of an high and dangerous offence if they continue, will be inclined entirely to relinquish the matter before the

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the machinations of their leaders can take effect.

IF you check effectually these first riotous meetings by any such methods as above, it may seem superfluous to make strong and rigorous laws against their mustering or training with arms: but as a farther security to peace, I would advise the most severe penalties against this practice. For the same reasons they should be prevented from building any ship above a certain burthen, or which might, in any other respect, be capable of annoying us; and this law to be executed with the greatest vigilance and exactness: the casting of cannon, or making any species of fire-arms or ammunition, to be prevented by the same methods.

AFTER the close of a rebellion, so bloody and expensive as this has already been, it

must be expected that the existence of society will require some examples to be made; but here, without doubt, British humanity will interfere to prevent every kind of cruelty or barbarity. If the offences of some few should make bloody examples absolutely requisite for the peace of mankind, the milder punishment of banishment and forfeiture should be deemed sufficient for those who have been less active, and less guilty.

As taxation has been so much dinned in our ears, it may seem singular that any one should write upon American affairs without insisting much upon that; which I have declined doing, because I by no means look upon it as the occasion of the present war, or its continuance. The plain fact is, that they, after a most violent outrage, took up arms against us, in which we have met them,

them, without perhaps either recurring immediately to any fixed principles upon the subject. We do not now war for a power to tax America, but we fight to reduce rebels who have brought this dilemma upon us, of either conquering or being conquered by them. Whatever speculative writers may say, this is the actual state of affairs at present.

THE Americans advance, that our being in possession of their trade, in exclusion of the rest of the world, is a sufficient compensation and advantage for all the expence we have been at, in settling and defending them. I have not materials, or powers of calculation, to ascertain this important allegation. The fact, however, certainly is, that we have never been in possession of their trade fully, owing to the extent of the illicit commerce among them :

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this argument would have been much fairer if that circumstance had been different; if so, I imagine we should not be at present situated as we are, for this war, in a great measure, may be called a *smuggling war*.

THOUGH I cannot descend to particular facts as to this argument of the Americans, yet I would reason upon the subject in the following manner; to wit, If their exclusive trade *is* a sufficient compensation and advantage, we should be totally against taxing them, or even requiring the least aid but upon extreme emergency. If both parties, with a sincere desire of harmony, would enter candidly into a thorough scrutiny upon the subject, it might be soon and satisfactorily adjusted; for this question is capable of demonstration by figures. If upon a fair and candid examination it appears, that their exclusive trade is *not* a sufficient

ficient compensation, &c. then, in plain common justice and reason, they should contribute something more towards the general expence of the empire, which being complied with, we ought, on our parts, for ever to wave the odious right of taxation.

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Justice, compensation, in this
common justice and is not
the expense of the state, which being
complicated with, we ought to pay for
over to have the others right of taxation.

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